

EVALUATION OF QUALITY OF SHARED VISIONS PROGRAMS

Regents' Center for Early
Developmental Education
University of Northern Iowa

- Year 1: 41 programs
- Year 2: 40 programs
- 100% cooperation with study

ECERS-Revised

- 43 items
- Seven subscales
- 463 individual indicators (1-5 per item)

Scoring the ECERS

- Seven-point scale
- Anchors on odd numbers
 - 1 = Inadequate
 - 3 = Minimal
 - 5 = Good
 - 7 = Excellent
- Individual indicators scored *Yes* or *No*

Scoring the Items

Starting with the indicators listed under 1 (inadequate), rater determines if the descriptors fit that classroom.

For example:

#22 Blocks

1.1 Few blocks are accessible for children's play.

If rater answers **Yes** to one or more of the indicators, a score of 1 (inadequate) is given for this item. If all indicators are scored **No**, rater can proceed to indicators under 3.

22 Blocks

3.1 Enough blocks and accessories are accessible for at least two children to build independent structures at the same time.

3.2 Some clear floor space used for block play.

3.3 Blocks and accessories accessible for daily use.

If fewer than half of indicators under 3 are scored **Yes**, the item is scored 1. If at least half of the indicators are scored **Yes**, the item is scored 2. If all indicators are scored **Yes**, rater can proceed to the indicators listed under 5.

22 Blocks

- 5.1 Enough blocks and accessories are accessible for three or more children to build at the same time.
- 5.2 Blocks and accessories are organized according to type.
- 5.3 Special block area set aside out of traffic, with storage and suitable building surface (Ex. flat rug or other steady surface).
- 5.4 Block area accessible for play for a substantial portion of the day.

22 Blocks

- 7.1 At least two types of blocks and a variety of accessories accessible daily (Ex. large and small; homemade and commercial).
- 7.2 Blocks and accessories are stored on open, labeled shelves (Ex. labeled with picture or outline of block).
- 7.3 Some block play available outdoors.

- While the instructions state that scoring an item can cease when a score is obtained, scoring all of the indicators is also an option. However, obtaining a **Yes** on indicators listed under a higher score will not change a low score.
- Scoring was done in this way for this study.

Results: *Total Score*

- Mean 5.6 (good)
- Range 3.5-6.8
- Standard deviation .58
- 10 programs (12%) scored between 3 and less than 5 (minimal)
- 55 programs (68%) scored between 5 and 6 (good)
- 16 programs (20%) scored above 6 (excellent)

ECERS-R Subscales

- Space & Furnishings (8 items)
- Personal Care Routines (6 items)
- Language-Reasoning (4 items)
- Activities (10 items)
- Interaction (5 items)
- Program Structure (4 items)
- Parents & Staff (6 items)

Items under *Space and Furnishings*

- Indoor space
- Furniture for routine care, play, and learning
- Furnishings for relaxation and comfort
- Room arrangement for play
- Space for privacy
- Child-related display
- Space for gross motor play
- Gross motor equipment

Results for *Space and Furnishings*

- Mean score 5.35 (good)
- Range 3.5-7
- Standard deviation .79
- 22 programs (27%) scored between 3 and less than 5 (minimal)
- 46 programs (57%) scored between 5 and 6 (good)
- 13 programs (16%) scored above 6 (excellent)

High scoring items under *Space and Furnishings*

- Furniture for routine care, play, and learning (mean 6.8)
- Room arrangement (mean 6.1)

Low scoring items under *Space and Furnishings*

- Child-related display (mean 4.6)
- Space for gross-motor play (mean 4.7)
- Gross motor equipment (mean 4.6)

Items under *Personal Care Routines*

- Greeting/departing
- Meals/snacks
- Nap/rest
- Toileting/diapering
- Health practices
- Safety practices

Results for *Personal Care Routines*

- Mean score 6.0 (good)
- Range 3.5-7
- Standard deviation .83
- 9 programs (11%) scored between 3 and less than 5 (minimal)
- 30 programs (37%) scored between 5 and 6 (good)
- 42 programs (52%) scored above 6 (excellent)

High scoring items under *Personal Care Routines*

- Greeting/departing (mean 6.8)
- Meals/snacks (mean 6.1)
- Health practices (mean 6.3)

Items under *Language and Reasoning*

- Books and pictures
- Encouraging children to communicate
- Using language to develop reasoning skills
- Informal use of language

Results for *Language and Reasoning*

- Mean score 5.7 (good)
- Range 1.5-7
- Standard deviation 1.0
- 1 program (1%) scored below 3 (inadequate)
- 15 programs (19%) scored between 3 and less than 5 (minimal)
- 33 programs (41%) scored between 5 and 6 (good)
- 32 programs (40%) scored above 6 (excellent)

High scoring items under *Language and Reasoning*

- Encouraging children to communicate (mean 6.4)
- Informal use of language (mean 6.1)

Item # 15 Books and pictures

- Indicator 5.3 “Books are organized in a reading center.”
- Eighty programs (98.8%) scored **YES** on this indicator.

Item # 15 Books and pictures

- Indicator 5.4 “Books, language materials, and activities are appropriate for children in group.”
- Eighty programs (98.8%) scored **YES** on this indicator.

Item # 16 *Encouraging children to communicate*

- Indicator 5.1 “Communication activities take place both during free play and group times (Ex. child dictates story about painting; small group discusses trip to store).”
- Seventy-eight programs (96.3%) scored **YES** on this indicator.

Item # 16 *Encouraging children to communicate*

- Indicator 5.2 “Materials that encourage children to communicate are accessible in a variety of interest centers (ex. small figures and animals in block area; puppets and flannel board pieces in book area; toys for dramatic play outdoors or indoors).”
- Seventy-three programs (90.1%) scored **YES** on this indicator.

Item # 16 *Encouraging children to communicate*

- Indicator 7.1 “Staff balance listening and talking appropriately for age and abilities of children during communication activities (Ex. leave time for children to respond; verbalize for child with limited communication skills).”
- Seventy-four programs (91.4%) scored **YES** on this indicator.

Item 18 *Informal use of language*

- Indicator 5.1 “Many staff-child conversations during free play and routines.”
- Seventy-six programs (93.8%) scored **YES** on this indicator.

Item 18 *Informal use of language*

- Indicator 5.2 “Language is primarily used by staff to exchange information with children and for social interaction.”
- Seventy-eight programs (96.3%) scored **YES** on this indicator.

Item 18 *Informal use of language*

- Indicator 5.4 “Staff encourage communication among children, including those with disabilities (ex. remind children to listen to one another; teach all children to sign if classmate uses sign language).”
- Seventy-nine programs (97.5%) scored **YES** on this indicator.

Low scoring items under *Language and Reasoning*

- Books and pictures (mean 5.2; however, 48 programs [59%] scored 4 or below)
- Using language to develop reasoning skills (mean 5.1; however 43 programs [53%] scored 4 or below)

Item # 15 *Book and pictures*

- Indicator 5.1 “A wide selection of books are (sic) available for a substantial portion of the day.”
- Twenty-eight programs (34.6%) scored **NO** on this indicator.

Item # 15 *Book and pictures*

- Indicator 5.5 “Staff read books to children informally (Ex. during free play, at naptime, as an extension of an activity).”
- Twenty-five programs (30.9%) scored **NO** on this indicator.

Item # 16 *Encouraging children to communicate*

- Indicator 7.2 “Staff link children’s spoken communication with written language (Ex. write down what children dictate and read it back to them; help them write note to parents).”
- Nineteen programs (23.8%) scored **NO** on this indicator.

Item # 17 *Using language to develop reasoning skills*

- Indicator 5.1 “Staff talk about logical relationships while children play with materials that stimulate reasoning (Ex. sequence cards, same/different games, size and shape toys, sorting games, number and math games).”
- Nineteen programs (23.8%) scored **NO** on this indicator.

Item # 17 *Using language to develop reasoning skills*

- Indicator 5.2 “Children encouraged to talk through or explain their reasoning when solving problems (Ex. why they sorted objects into different groups; in what way are two pictures the same or different).”
- Thirty-eight programs (46.9%) scored **NO** on this indicator.

Item # 17 *Using language to develop reasoning skills*

- Indicator 7.1 “Staff encourage children to reason throughout the day, using actual events and experiences as a basis for concept development (Ex. children learn sequence by talking about their experiences in the daily routine or recalling the sequence of a cooking project).”
- Eighteen programs (22.2%) scored **NO** on this indicator.

Item # 17 *Using language to develop reasoning skills*

- Indicator 7.2 “Concepts are introduced in response to children’s interests or needs to solve problems (Ex. talk children through balancing a tall block building; help children figure out how many spoons are needed to set table).”

Thirty programs (37%) scored **NO** on this indicator.

Item 18 *Informal use of language*

- Indicator 7.2 “Children are asked questions to encourage them to give longer and more complex answers (Ex. young child is asked ‘what’ or ‘where’ questions; older child is asked ‘why’ or ‘how’ questions).”
- Twenty-three programs (28.4%) scored **NO** on this indicator.

Items under *Activities*

- Fine motor
- Art
- Music/movement
- Blocks
- Sand/water
- Dramatic play
- Nature/science
- Math/number
- Use of TV, video, and/or computers
- Promoting acceptance of diversity

Results for *Activities*

- Mean score 4.8 (minimal)
- Range 2.7-6.9
- Standard deviation .82
- 1 program (1%) scored below 3 (inadequate)
- 45 programs (56%) scored between 3 and less than 5 (minimal)
- 27 programs (33%) scored between 5 and 6 (good)
- 8 programs (10%) scored above 6 (excellent)

High scoring items under *Activities*

- Use of TV, videos, and/or computers
(mean 6.0)

Low scoring items under *Activities*

- Art (mean 4.8)
- Music/movement (mean 3.8)
- Blocks (mean 4.1)
- Dramatic play (mean 4.2)
- Nature/science (mean 4.2)

Items under *Interaction*

- Supervision of gross motor activities
- General supervision of children (other than gross motor)
- Discipline
- Staff-child interaction
- Interactions among children

Results for *Interaction*

- Mean score 6.3 (excellent)
- Range 1.6-7
- Standard deviation .94
- 2 programs (2.5%) scored below 3 (inadequate)
- 2 programs (2.5%) scored between 3 and less than 5 (minimal)
- 22 programs (27%) scored between 5 and 6 (good)
- 55 programs (68%) scored above 6 (excellent)

High scoring items under *Interaction*

- General supervision of children (other than gross motor) (mean 6.3)
- Discipline (mean 6.3)
- Staff-child interactions (mean 6.7)
- Interactions among children (mean 6.5)

Results for *Program Structure*

- Mean score 6.1 (excellent)
- Range 2.3-7
- Standard deviation 1.13
- 2 programs (2.5%) scored below 3 (inadequate)
- 10 programs (12%) scored between 3 and less than 5 (minimal)
- 21 programs (26%) scored between 5 and 6 (good)
- 48 programs (59%) scored above 6 (excellent)

High scoring items under *Program Structure*

- Group time (mean 6.3)
- Provisions for children with disabilities (mean 6.9) (Note: *Not applicable* was allowed if no children with disabilities were present)

Items under Parents and Staff

- Provisions for parents
- Provisions for personal needs of staff
- Provisions for professional needs of staff
- Staff interaction and cooperation
- Supervision and evaluation of staff
- Opportunities for professional growth

Results for *Parents and Staff*

- Mean score 5.8 (good)
- Range 3.7-7
- Standard deviation .80
- 13 programs (16%) scored between 3 and less than 5 (minimal)
- 37 programs (46%) scored between 5 and 6 (good)
- 31 programs (38%) scored above 6 (excellent)

High scoring items under *Parents and Staff*

- Provisions for parents (mean 6.6)
- Staff interaction and cooperation (mean 6.6)
- Supervision and evaluation of staff (mean 6.4)

Low scoring items under *Parents and Staff*

- Provisions for personal needs of staff (mean 4.4)
- Provisions for professional needs of staff (mean 4.97)

How do these results compare to national studies?

- The Cost, Quality, and Child Outcomes study found that out of 401 childcare centers randomly selected in four states, the mean ECERS score was 4.0. Only 14% scored 5 or above. Almost half (49%) scored 4 or below.
- Midwest Child Care Research Study found that quality in a random sample of programs for preschool-aged children was in the minimal range (between 4 and 5).

Why is quality important?

- Participation in high-quality preschool programs is associated with greater language, literacy, math, and cognitive skills; enhanced social development; and long-term school success.
- Participation in poor-quality preschool programs is associated with difficulties in academic and social development, poor language and math abilities, and poor self-perception.

Why is quality important?

- Results of longitudinal research (The Cost, Quality, and Outcomes Study Goes to School) show that children who participated in higher quality child care had better language and math skills from preschool into elementary school.
- These results were even stronger for children whose mothers had less education.

Why is quality important?

- Children who participated in higher quality child care had better cognitive and social skills in 2nd grade.
- These findings hold true even after controlling for background characteristics (mother's level of education, gender, and ethnicity) and the quality of the kindergarten and 2nd grade experience.

Evaluation of Kindergarten Performance of Shared Visions Children

- Followed into kindergarten 127 children who participated in Shared Visions programs (1996-97 and 1997-98)
- Assessed teacher perceptions of children's competence, children's performance, and children's developmental assets

Kindergarten teachers were asked to rate children at the beginning and end of the year on 18 competencies:

- Expressing choices
- Solving problems
- Engaging in complex play
- Cooperating in classroom routines
- Relating to adults
- Relating to peers
- Making friends
- Engaging in social problem solving
- Making and building
- Drawing and painting
- Engaging in pretend play
- Understanding speech
- Speaking
- Showing interest in books
- Demonstrating knowledge about books
- Beginning reading
- Beginning writing

Teachers used the following scale to rate their perceptions of children's competence:

- 1 = performs well below the average of children in my class this year
- 2 = performs slightly below the average of children in my class this year
- 3 = performs at approximately the average of children in my class this year
- 4 = performs slightly above the average of children in my class this year
- 5 = performs well above the average of children in my class this year

Results

- Kindergarten teachers rated children from SV programs favorably
- Mean total score 3.13
- Mean scores above average for all except 3 items (*engaging in complex play, beginning reading and beginning writing*)

Literacy items

- Only 59% of the children were rated at or above average in beginning reading
- 18% of the children were rated well below average in beginning reading
- Only 51% of the children were rated at or above average in beginning writing
- 22% of the children were rated well below average in beginning writing

Children's Performance at the End of the Kindergarten Year

- The Child Observation Record (COR) was completed by teachers at the end of the year
- 18 items in 4 subscales were selected
- Subscales included *initiative*, *social relations*, *creative representation*, and *language and literacy*

Results of end-of-year COR

- Total COR score: mean 3.93
- Initiative: mean 3.97
- Creative representation: mean 4.14
- Social relations: mean 3.94
- Language and literacy: mean 3.78

Children's Developmental Assets

- Internal assets assessed with a 29-item survey completed by kindergarten teachers at the end of the year
- Five-point rating scale same as teacher perceptions rating scale

Children's Internal Assets:

- Commitment to learning (ex: *Child is motivated to do well in school, regardless of the promise of rewards or the threat of punishment*)
- Positive values (ex: *Child uses classroom materials responsibly*)
- Social competencies (ex: *Child respects the rules of a game when playing with classmates*)
- Positive identity (ex: *Child exhibits good self-esteem*)

Results of Analysis of Internal Assets

- Shared Visions children were rated slightly above average (mean 3.17) in internal assets.
- Children rated high in internal assets were perceived by their teachers as more competent than children rated low on internal assets.

Ten items on the COR did not overlap with Internal Assets:

- Solving problems
- Engaging in complex play
- Making and building
- Drawing and painting
- Pretending
- Understanding speech
- Speaking
- Demonstrating knowledge about books
- Beginning reading
- Beginning writing

Effects of Internal Assets on Children's Performance

- Children rated high in internal assets outperformed children rated low in internal assets on the COR
- Mean COR scores of the children rated high in internal assets were consistently above 4.
- Mean COR scores of children rated low in internal assets were below 4 on all except one item.

COR Beginning Reading Item

0 (--)	1. Child does not yet identify letters or numbers.
28 (24%)	2. Child identifies some letters or words.
52 (45%)	3. Child reads several words, or a few simple phrases ("I love Mom").
11 (10%)	4. Child reads a variety of sentences.
24 (21%)	5. Child reads simple stories or books.

COR Beginning Writing Item

- | | |
|----------|---|
| 0 (--) | 1. Child does not attempt to write. |
| 2 (2%) | 2. Child writes using squiggles and marks as letters. |
| 34 (30%) | 3. Child copies or writes identifiable letters, perhaps including own name. |
| 65 (57%) | 4. Child writes some words or short phrases besides own name. |
| 13 (11%) | 5. Child writes a variety of phrases or sentences. |

Summer Institute on Constructivist Education

- Focus on curriculum, including math, science, literacy, and music
- Cost subsidized by a grant, so tuition is less than UNI's per-hour rate
- Brochure and registration form can be found at:

<http://www.uni.edu/continued/ces/ce/index.html>